

JEWISH HUMOR.

Its Flavor of Bitterness and Its Satire of Judaism.

Roman said of the Jews, "The Semite people are almost entirely without the power to laugh." Surely had he looked for traces of Jewish humor in the light which Heine casts back upon his dark tradition he would never have made so sweeping a statement. For eight years Heine lay upon his "mattress grave" in Paris suffering excruciating agony. He deserved, he said, to have awarded to him "the grand medals of pain and misery." Leopold Zunz said almost the same words of the whole Hebrew people, "If there are ranks in suffering Israel takes precedence of all the nations." The humor of Israel is flavored with bitterness and plays round the greater subjects of thought and of speculation; plays like the humor of a man in pain.

Listen to the lament of a satirist born at Arles in 1287 who finds the works of the Jewish law an intolerable burden and seems to have come, like Heine, to the bitter conclusion that "Judaism is not a religion, it is a misfortune!"

Oh, hapless sire, distraught with cares,
Whose wife to him male children bears,
For all of them, or rich or poor,
Have only suffering to endure.
This is caused by the Jewish creed,
Whose yoke is hard to bear indeed.
Its many laws and regulations
Which are unknown to other nations
Every Hebrew must observe
With watchful eye and straining nerve;
Even though he shares in public functions,
He still must follow their injunctions.

The Bible is not half enough;
Glosses there are and other stuff
In which he erudite must be,
Especially in theology.
In all the Talmud may debate,
In authors' quarrels and debate,
In things particularly small,
Of no significance at all.

One more mediaeval quotation, this time from the pen of a Barcelona Jew. The lines can hardly perhaps be called humorous, but they illustrate with a certain terse comedy the great value set by the race upon three things—money, knowledge and domestic happiness. If a man has none of them the poet has no better advice to give him than to hold his tongue or to hang himself:

What is the most useful thing to any man in life?
Knowledge or wealth or a good and loving wife.
But if none of these commodities man has ever got
Then by keeping golden silence he might improve his lot.
And if he cannot do so, that poor and hapless knave,
Then let him go away at once and dig himself a grave.

On his deathbed Heine made his last joke, and it is typically Jewish. "Reviewing his by no means irreproachable past," he hoped that God might forgive him, "for 'est son met'er"—(that is his trade). Another story illustrates yet more perfectly the bitter humor of the Jew. It is the story of a dying rabbi "who had been all his lifetime extremely religious, but had likewise always suffered much want and misery. 'Do you know,' he said to those in the sickroom, 'if after all the sad experiences I have had in the past there is no future life I shall be greatly amused.'"—London Spectator.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

The prudent man opens his eyes and shuts his mouth.

Treat every one as though you expected him to some day be your enemy.

If there is a dog in the manger throw him out. He doesn't belong there.

Are you as active in paying a bill you owe as you are in collecting a bill due you?

If it were not for the fact that most people ask too much indemnity there wouldn't be much use for courts.

You can get up a quarrel, but will you be any better off after you have quarreled so fiercely that peace will be agreeable?

It is a good plan for a woman to occasionally let her husband have his way without giving him a look that will take the pleasant taste out.—Atlantic Globe.

Curiosities About Fish Scales.

The thin, silvery coating of fish scales derives its luster from many minute crystals of lime, mixed with a peculiar substance called "guanine." This coating of silver crystals is very easily rubbed off the scales, and in the case of a European species of carp known as the "bleak" the crystals are so numerous that a metallic pigment, commercially known as "argentine," is made from them. The large globular glass beads, known as "German" or "Roman" pearls, are coated on the inside with this substance. In some species of fish with lusterless scales the silvery lining is found on the inside of the body. A well known example of this is seen in the common smelt.

Luck or Good Management.

"I heard Crabbe say he had never had such luck in his business as he's having now, but I didn't understand whether it was good luck or bad."

"Oh, he meant bad luck, of course! If it were good luck he wouldn't speak of it as 'luck' at all."—Philadelphia Ledger.

MEDIAEVAL REVIVALS.

Methods of the Franciscans in the Thirteenth Century.

At least two methods seem to be used among revivalist workers both of which have come down from mediaeval times. The Franciscans insisted on an obedient band of workers, with an almost military organization. They indeed called themselves the "army of Jesus." At the head of the order stood the "general," a new term in the thirteenth century religious life. The chief of the band of workers in any Italian town took as his title the designation given to the military leader in the city republic in which they had their temporary abode. In Venice he was il gonfaloniere de Giesu, in Milan il capitano del Giesu and so on in other towns. They had distinct modes of beginning their work prescribed for them with as definite details as if they were Methodist Episcopal missionaries or officers and soldiers of the Salvation Army.

When they began work in any town they were ordered to select a hall if possible in the lowest and poorest district. They were forbidden to paint either pulpit or bench. They were to assemble in front of their hall and march through the streets singing their hymns, playing on pipes and waving banners. When they had gathered a sufficient crowd they were to return to their hall, take their followers in with them and deliver short practical addresses, interspersed with hymn singing. Francis had a great dislike to all book learning. He told his followers to mingle with the common people, to talk with the masons when they were building, with the weavers when they were weaving, with the women when in Italian fashion they were washing clothes by the side of the streams. They would thus, he said, find what filled the minds of the people, what spiritual help they needed from the preachers, what difficulties they had in becoming followers of Jesus, and in a morning's conversation they would find the material for their addresses.

The Franciscan revivalists subjected their converts also to discipline and kept them united with each other. They became what were called Tertiaries of the order and made vows to live after a certain prescribed fashion, to devote so much of their money to good works and to give a certain amount of their time to the practice of active benevolence.—Principal Lindsay in Contemporary Review.

A WEIRD STORY.

Strange Experience With Phantasms In East Africa.

Die Uebersinnliche Welt of Berlin gives an account of phantasms in east Africa. They are described by Colonel Langfeld as having come to his experience. A friend of his, starting for Victoria Nyanza, had said: "If any harm befalls me I'll let you know. I'll give you a sign." The only white civilian there was the son of a large colonial merchant.

Two months later the pigeons in their cot in the middle of the yard appeared to be disturbed. The colonel was aroused in the night and saw two round points, more like glowing coals than the eyes of a wild beast, gleaming from the dovecot. He fired and saw an animal like a chimpanzee, having long, reddish brown hair, fall to the ground and immediately rise and disappear round the corner of the house, uttering a terrible shriek. An old Sudanese declared that it was a devil, that it came as a warning when a European had died an unnatural death and that this was the third time he had seen it. A strict search revealed no traces of blood, although the shot had been fired at only four yards range. Later the colonel, still awake, heard light footsteps on the veranda. Rising to see who was there, he was surprised to find a European sitting at his table, which was fully set out for a meal. As the stranger raised his head in the full moonlight he saw that it was his friend (who had gone to Nyanza), but hollow eyed and with a suffering mien. The colonel managed to utter a question, when suddenly the apparition vanished and the table appeared clear of all dishes. Six weeks later word came to the station that on the same day on which these remarkable events had happened or seemed to happen the young merchant had lost his way and had been killed and partly eaten by wild beasts.

Dinner in a Bell.

In the tower of Erfurt cathedral hangs a huge bell ten feet high and thirty feet in circumference, weighing thirteen tons. Within this in July, 1713, dined ten of the town's most opulent burghers on dishes cooked in a kitchen temporarily erected on the beam that supported the ponderous mass of tinnabular metal. To celebrate this repast medals were struck, having on the obverse the portraits of the guests and on the reverse the representation of the curious scene.

Use For the Synonym.

Teacher—What is a synonym? Pupil—A word that has the same meaning as another word. Teacher—And why does our language possess synonyms? Pupil—So you can use one when you don't know how to spell the other one.—Exchange.

DIETARY STANDARDS.

What Observation Indicates to Be the Average Man's Daily Food Need.

Accepting the daily dietary standards which are based upon observations as to what people are accustomed to consume, it is plain that the average man doing from light to moderate muscular work must take each day approximately 116 grams of proteid matter (18 grams of nitrogen), with sufficient fat and carbohydrate to yield a total fuel value of 3,650 large calories. The usual proportion of carbohydrate (mostly starchy food) is about 400 grams to 500 grams of fat. In other words, the average man needs, according to the above hypothesis, approximately 120 grams of proteid, 500 grams of carbohydrate and 60 grams of fat for his daily ration. In order to obtain these amounts of nutrients he would require per day three-fourths of a pound of ordinary roast beef, one pound of boiled potato, one-half pound of white bread and one-fourth of a pound of butter. Naturally much greater variety of food might be adopted with the same nutritive values as the above, but these figures will suffice to give some impression of the quantities of ordinary cooked food-stuffs required to yield the nitrogen and the total fuel value called for by the above standard dietary.

A more elaborate diet, one in large measure free from meat and having essentially the same content of nitrogen and with a total fuel value of approximately 3,000 calories, would be as follows: Fried hominy, six ounces; sirup, three ounces; baked potato, eight ounces; butter, one and one-half ounces; baked spaghetti, ten ounces; mashed potato, ten ounces; boiled turnip, six ounces; bread, two ounces; apple sauce, eight ounces; apple tapioca pudding, twelve ounces; fried sweet potato, eight ounces; fried bacon, one ounce; fruit jam, four ounces; coffee, one and one-half pints, and tea, three-fourths of a pint. Such a diet, owing to its vegetable nature and lack of concentration, is naturally quite voluminous. A greater concentration of diet is easily obtained by replacement of a portion of the vegetable matter by meat, and this the ordinary man, with his highly developed palate, usually prefers to do because of the increased flavor which his acquired taste now calls for. Further, the resources at the command of the civilized man render possible great variety in matters of diet, but whatever the character of the daily food or however great the number and variety of the ingredients it will be found that the nitrogen content and fuel value of the daily food of mankind will in general correspond in large measure to the dietary standards usually adopted throughout the civilized world.—Russell H. Chittenden in Century.

Matches of Size.

If all of the matches made in a single year could be put together they would make seventy-eight matches each long enough to reach from the earth to the moon. Each match would burn for several years and would give out as much heat energy as would be consumed by three freight locomotives in a day. Forty of these matches would be of the safety variety, twenty-three would have sulphur tips, and the rest would be of the strike anywhere sort. Only one would be a wax match, and that would fall a trifle short of the proper length, say 700 miles.

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